



U.S. Interests Section Newsletter

Information for American Citizens in Cuba

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Forecasters predict calmer Hurricane Season for Caribbean

A Colorado State University forecast team said six hurricanes are expected to churn through the Atlantic this year.

If the predictions are accurate, 2009 would be much calmer than last year, which was one of the most active seasons on record with 16 tropical storms, including eight that became hurricanes.

Hurricanes Bertha in July, Gustav in August, Ike in September, Omar in October and Paloma in November were all intense storms that wreaked serious damage in the United States and the Caribbean.



Obama to Allow More Travel, Money Transfers to Cuba

On April 13, President Obama announced the United States will allow Cuban Americans unlimited travel and money transfers to family in Cuba.

Cuban Americans may also send clothes, personal hygiene items, seeds, fishing gear and other personal necessities to family members in Cuba. Businesses will be able to obtain licenses to sell cellular telephones, television services and other telecommunications devices to Cubans, with family members in the United States allowed to pay for them, the White House said.

For more information, please visit:

http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2009/April/20090413161306dmslahr_ellek0.299206.html

Are You Ready for Hurricane Season?

There are many practical steps you can take to help keep yourself and your property safe in the event of a hurricane. The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency has detailed hurricane preparedness information available at www.fema.gov/areyouready/hurricanes

Está usted preparado para la Temporada de Huracanes?

Existen diversas acciones prácticas que Ud. puede realizar para protegerse a sí mismo y a sus bienes en caso de un huracán. La Agencia Federal para el Manejo de Situaciones de Emergencia de los Estados Unidos (Federal Emergency Management Agency) brinda información detallada sobre cómo prepararse para un huracán en su portal de internet en español http://www.fema.gov/pdf/media/2006/spa_hurr_be_safe.pdf

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(Printouts of website materials are available in the ACS Office)

IRS 2008 TAX GUIDE AVAILABLE FOR U.S. CITIZENS LIVING ABROAD

The IRS has a new tax guide to help tax filers prepare their 2008 taxes, IRS Publication 54, the *"Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad."*

This publication discusses special tax rules for U.S. citizens and resident aliens who work abroad or who have income earned in foreign countries.

If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien, your worldwide income generally is subject to U.S. income tax, regardless of where you are living. You are subject to the same income tax filing requirements that apply to U.S. citizens or resident aliens living in the United States.

Expatriation tax provisions apply to U.S. citizens who have renounced their citizenship and long-term residents who have ended their residency.

IRS Publication 54 contains useful tax information such as:

- ☐ Whether you must file a U.S. tax return,
- ☐ When and where to file your return,
- ☐ How to report your income if it is paid in foreign currency,
- ☐ Withholding Tax for income, social security and Medicare taxes from the pay of U.S. citizens and resident aliens,
- ☐ Selfemployment tax, and
- ☐ Foreign earned income exclusion, housing exclusion, and deduction.

More information is available at the IRS website:
<http://www.irs.gov/publications/>

ACS COMPLETES SUCCESSFUL WARDEN TEST

Among the highest priorities of USINT is the safety and security of Americans in Cuba. USINT depends on our wardens, American citizen volunteers, to reach out to the American community in the event of an emergency.

On April 6, 2009, ACS conducted a test of the warden communication system to insure accurate telephone and email addresses in case of an emergency. Messages were sent in three different ways: email, text messaging, and telephone.

Over three-fourths of the wardens responded to our message during the first hour. Specifically, of the 32 primary wardens, **23** contacted ACS within 60 minutes. This is important because quick notification is critical during an emergency. We are grateful for the continued support from our volunteer wardens.

Free File Home - Your Link to Free Federal Online Filing



The Free File program provides free federal income tax preparation and electronic filing for eligible taxpayers through a partnership between the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Free File Alliance LLC, a group of private sector tax software companies.

More information at: <http://www.irs.gov/efile/>

Havana Biennial 2009



AMERICAN ARTISTS EXHIBIT AT HAVANA BIENNIAL

Chief of Mission Jonathan Farrar and Luly Duke, President and Founder of Fundacion Amistad, co-hosted a reception on April 1, 2009, at the Chief of Mission residence to welcome American artists. Thirty-three contemporary American artists are participating in the *Chelsea visits Havana* exhibit at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes until May 17, 2009. Fundacion Amistad is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to promote better understanding between the Cuban and American people through *Bridges to Culture and Humanitarian Aid* projects and was instrumental in bringing the Chelsea exhibit to Havana.

The art exhibit is part of the 10th Havana Biennial, a celebration of the visual arts with works from more than 300 artists from 54 countries, which runs until April 30. The biennial's theme is "Integration and Resistance in the Global Age," highlighting issues of globalization, immigration, and the economy. Most of the works are at Fortaleza de San Carlos de la Cabaña, a cavernous fortress built by the Spanish beginning in 1763.

For more information visit: <http://www.bienalhabana.cult.cu/bienaldelahabana/boletinen.php?nop=1>



Congressional Delegation Visits USINT

Six members of the Congressional Black Caucus visited USINT on Monday, April 6, 2009, to thank employees for their public service. The American delegation was visiting Cuba on a fact-finding mission.

Members included: Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif, Rep. Laura Richardson, D-Calif., Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, D- MO., Rep. Bobby Rush, D- IL, Rep. Marcia Fudge ,D-Ohio.



Consular Leadership Day Celebrated

Members of American Citizen Services, Non Immigrant Visa, and Immigrant Visa offices of the USINT Consular Section celebrated the annual "Consular Leadership Day" March 6.

Activities included reviewing the mission statement along with team building projects and discussions about improving operations.



State Department Information on Youth and Education

The State Department Website has a “Youth and Education” section with information regarding student and education programs. The Student section includes Students Abroad, Humphrey Fellowships, and Cultural Exchanges, Education-Fulbright Program. The Education section describes Exchange Visitor Program, Grants for Educational and Cultural Programs, Education Programs from the U.S. Diplomacy Center, and Educational Partnerships (cooperation between U.S. and foreign post-secondary institutions). Visit at: <http://www.state.gov/youthandeducation/>



Interested in Becoming a Foreign Service Officer?

Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) are America's advocates, promoting peace and supporting prosperity as they advance our interests and protect American citizens throughout the world. Since our work has global impact and is carried out around the world, FSOs are located at over 265 embassies, consulates and other diplomatic missions in The Americas, Africa, Europe, East Asia and the Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, and South and Central Asia.

For more information, go to: <http://careers.state.gov/officer/index.html>

USINT offers Foreign Service written exam on June 6

USINT Havana will offer an opportunity to take the Foreign Service Written Exam on Saturday, June 6, 2009, at 9:00 a.m. in the Roosevelt Internet Center. Registration will open on April 29. Due to the limited number of seats available at USINT, please register early. In November, registration closed very early due a large number of test applicants so don't wait to register.

If you have any questions, please contact the Management Officer, Karin Sullivan, at (53)(7) 833-3551 x2401. Interested candidates may find more information and register for the exam at: <http://careers.state.gov/officer/register.html>

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Walk-in Hours: Mon.-Thu. 8:00a.m.-4:30pm, Fri. 8:00a.m.-3:30 pm.
Closed U.S. & Cuban Holidays and the first Friday of each month